DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 237 519 TM 830 351

AUTHOR Baird, Leonard L.
TITLE Attempts at Defining Interpersonal Competencies.
INSTITUTION Educational Testing Service, Princeton, N.J.
REPORT NO ETS-RR-83-15
PUB DATE Mar 83
NOTE 38p.; Some pages may be marginally legible due to small print. Research supported by the Program Planning Research Council.
AVAILABLE FROM Educational Testing Service, Re earch Publications, R-116, Princeton, NJ 08541.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Children; Interpersonal Communication; *Interpersonal Competence; *Leadership Qualities; *Skill Analysis; *Skill Development; *Social Development; Socialization

ABSTRACT

This review was intended to identify generic skills in interpersonal relations and to examine the implications of research for attempts to assess these skills. Using a developmental framework, three areas of research were reviewed: the social development of children and adolescents, clinical studies of interpersonal competence, and studies of effective leadership. Six skills appeared in this literature: use of basic social forms, common interactions with others, constructive assertiveness, internal monitoring, emotional expression, and the coordination of group activities. (Author)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

RR-83-15

ED237519

RESEARCH REPORT

ATTEMPTS AT DEFINING INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCIES

Leonard L. Baird

March 1983

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L. L. Baird

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

Educational Testing Service
Princeton, New Jersey

TM 830 351

Attempts at Defining Interpersonal Competencies

Leonard L. Baird

November, 1982

This research was supported by the Program Planning Research Council.

Copyright © 1983 Educational Testing Service. All rights reserved.

Abstract

This review was intended to identify generic skills in interpersonal relations and to examine the implications of research for attempts to assess these skills. Using a developmental framework, three areas of research were reviewed: the social development of children and adolescents, clinical studies of interpersonal competence, and studies of effective leadership. Six skills appeared in this literature: use of basic social forms, common interactions with others, constructive assertiveness, internal monitoring, emotional expression, and the coordination of group activities.

Interpersonal Skills

Obviously, skills in relating to other people are important to people. Books on dealing with others effectively are perennial parts of the best seller lists, ranging from Dale Carnegie's How to Win Friends and Influence People to Dyer's Pulling Your Own Strings. The flow of advice on interpersonal relations includes the daily responses of Ann Landers and Dear Abby and the monthly advice given out in magazines as diverse as Women's Day and Penthouse. More scholarly or scientific studies have ranged from small group research to industrial psychology. Obviously, it would be impossible to review all of this vast literature. The purpose of this review is to examine three selected bodies of literature for their implications for those who wish to assess interpersonal skills. These three bodies of literature were chosen because they seem to have the clearest and most direct bearing on the task of assessing these skills. These areas are developmental psychology, clinical studies of interpersonal competence, and leadership.

The most scholarly approaches to interpersonal skills are those used by developmental psychologists and social psychologists studying the acquisition of social competence among children and psychiatrists and clinical pscyhologists studying the deficits in the interpersonal skills of their patients. The developmental literature focuses on the growth of interpersonal skills among children. The clinical literature focuses on the basic or minimal skills needed for everyday functioning in our society (i.e., meeting the minimal social demands of a situation and exhibiting socially appropriate behavior). Some people exceed these

minimal standards. "They act so as to enhance or facilitate interpersonal outcomes of linking and control. They do so in ways that meet their own needs without antagonizing others (and even assist others in meeting their own needs)." (Friedman, 1980, p. 9) The literature that bears most closely on this behavior is found in studies of leadership. This literature will be reviewed in turn.

Basic Approach

The basic approach used here will be to examine the changing definitions and requirements for interpersonal skills throughout the life span. That is, we shall use a developmental approach, focusing on the developmental tasks required at various ages and the interpersonal skills needed to meet those tasks. Since our main concern is with the aspects of social skill that are important for youth and adults because they constitute the main users of our programs, we shall treat early development very briefly.

The concept of developmental tasks. Originally proposed by Havighurst (1972), developmental tasks have been defined as:

> ...skills, knowledge, functions, and attitudes which an individual has to acquire at a certain point in his life; they are acquired through physical maturation, social expectations, and personal efforts. Successful mastery of these tasks will result in adjustment... and will prepare the individual for the harder tasks ahead. Failure in a given developmental task will result in a corresponding lack of adjustment, increased anxiety, social disapproval, and the inability to handle the more difficult tasks to come.... Through its socializing agents and methods of reinforcement and punishment, society attempts to help the individual learn those developmental tasks at their proper age levels (Muuss, 1966).

The tasks appropriate to each period of development and the skills needed to master the tasks will be discussed in greater detail in the

following pages, but their general significance is summarized by Rathjen (1980):

> "At each point [in the life cycle] it is necessary to know what tasks a person must be able to perform successfully in order to be socially competent. From society's perspective, the list of tasks must include those related to getting along with other people and becoming a productive member of society. In addition to love- and work-related tasks, society expects people to be able to cope with life stresses such as the death of a loved one, unemployment, and advancing age. From an individual perspective the list might be expanded to include more personal tasks such as achievement of autonomy or self-confidence." (Rathjen, 1980, p. 17)

The reader interested in more information about research related to developmental tasks is referred to the annual publication Life-span Development and Behavior edited by Baltes and Brian, and such authors as Lamb (1978), and Musser et al. (1979).

Childhood

The interpersonal developmental tasks of childhood have been described in many texts on children's development and child psychology. These have been the subject of intensive research, and need only be mentioned here briefly. They include the separation of self from nonself, recognition and interaction with adults, learning to interact and play with other children, the control of emotions, and the internalization of social norms (Anderson & Messick, 1974; Goffman, Gonso, & Rasmusser, 1975). Of particular interest are the self-control and self-management skills needed by children to meet social and academic demands (Camp, 1980), and the interpersonal problem-solving skills needed by children (Shure, 1980). These later include the generation of alternatives, and

the evaluation of consequences when the child wishes to improve peer relationships, deal with authority figures, deal with interpersonal conflicts, control negative emotions, express feelings, and develop assertive belief systems (Rotherman, 1980). Specific training programs have been developed in each of these areas. In general, the thrust of childhood development is away from the dependent status of a child toward the independent status of a young adult who can deal effectively with others in an autonomous way. The reader who is interested in more detailed examinations of childhood social development is referred to such basic texts as Mussen, Conger, and Kagan (1979), and to more specialized and technical studies as Rolf, Sells, and Golden (1972) and Selman (1976), and to the annual series Advances in Child Development edited by Reese and others. The teaching of social skills in the elementary school years has been reviewed by Cartledge and Milburn, 1978.

Adolescent Tasks and Skills

The movement toward autonomous and effective interaction with others that characterizes childhood becomes even more intense in adolescence. The social tasks are indicated by the goals of adolescent development shown in Figure 1 (Cole & Hall, 1966). This listing provides a good idea of societal expectations for the adolescent and some indication of the internal states expected. The underlying psychological factors needed to deal with these tasks have been summarized by Rotherman (1980), who based them on an extensive review of the literature:

1. Cognitive factors
   a. Problem-solving ability emphasizing alternative generation and means-end thinking

A. General Emotional Maturity			
From	1. Destructive expressions of emotion 2. Subjective interpretation of situations 3. Childish fears and motives 4. Habits of escaping from conflicts	toward	1. Harmless or constructive expressions 2. Objective interpretations of situations 3. Adult stimuli to emotions 4. Habits of facing and solving conflicts
B. Establishment of Heterosexual Interests			
From	1. Exclusive interest in members of same sex 2. Experience with many possible mates 3. Acute awareness of sexual development	toward	1. Normal interest in members of opposite sex 2. Selection of one mate 3. Casual acceptance of sexual maturity
C. General Social Maturity			
From	1. Feelings of uncertainty of acceptance by peers 2. Social awkwardness 3. Social intolerance 4. Slavish imitation of peers	toward	1. Feelings of secure acceptance by peers 2. Social poise 3. Social tolerance 4. Freedom from slavish imitation
D. Emancipation from Home Control			
From	1. Close parental control 2. Reliance upon parents for security 3. Identification with parents as models	toward	1. Self-control 2. Reliance upon self for security 3. Attitude toward parents as friends
E. Intellectual Maturity			
From	1. Blind acceptance of truth on the basis of authority 2. Desire for facts 3. Many temporary interests	toward	1. Demand for evidence before acceptance 2. Desire for explanations of facts 3. Few, stable interests
F. Selection of an Occupation			
From	1. Interest in glamorous occupations 2. Interest in many occupations 3. Over- or under-estimation of one's own abilities 4. Irrelevance of interests to abilities	toward	1. Interest in practicable occupations 2. Interest in one occupation 3. Reasonably accurate estimate of one's own abilities 4. Reconciliation of interest and abilities
G. Uses of Leisure			
From	1. Interest in vigorous, unorganized games 2. Interest in individual prowess 3. Participation in games 4. Interest in many hobbies 5. Membership in many clubs	toward	1. Interest in team games and intellectual contests 2. Interest in success of team 3. Spectator interest in games 4. Interest in one or two hobbies 5. Membership in few clubs
H. Philosophy of Life			
From	1. Indifference toward general principles 2. Behavior dependent upon specific, learned habits 3. Behavior based upon gaining pleasure and avoiding pain	toward	1. Interest in and understanding of general principles 2. Behavior guided by moral principles 3. Behavior based upon conscience and duty
I. Identification of Self			
From	1. Little or no perception of self 2. Little idea of other people's perception of self 3. Identification of self with impossible goals	toward	1. Moderately accurate perception of self 2. Good idea of other people's perception of self 3. Identification of self with possible goals

Figure 1. Goals of Adolescent Development

b. Discrimination of socially desirable behaviors
c. Self-monitoring through self-reinforcement and self-punishment

2. Behavioral factors
   a. Verbal behaviors such as positive statements to self and other, friendship initiation and feedback
   b. Nonverbal behaviors such as posture, voice tone, latency, gestures, and eye contact

3. Emotional factors
   a Monitoring and assessment of positive and negative emotional states
   b. Methods of relaxing or control of negative emotional states (p. 79)

Rotherman placed these factors into a more general model for social interaction representing an effective interpersonal style. This is shown in Figure 2.

Rotherman notes that these cognitive, behavioral and emotional coping skills are interdependent which in turn suggests that "...any component could disrupt adaptive functioning and lead to ineffective interpersonal interactions. A spiralling effect is easily established in either a positive or negative direction." (p. 75) This interdependency suggests the importance of integrating the various components. The skills are particularly important when the person is initiating new relationships and delivering or receiving positive and negative verbal responses. The strength of the Rotherman model is that it shows the interrelationships among the effective cognitive, behavioral and emotional skills that are called for when a particular strategy is employed, and that it suggests effective responses in various situations. For example, when coping with negative emotional responses, it is helpful to identify one's own tendency to punish oneself covertly or deal in catastrophic thinking ("This is awful, terrible and the end of everything"), and then to "talk to oneself" about one's reaction and reinforce positive thoughts and controlling thought. Behaviorally, it is helpful to control one's

Model of Strategy for Social Interactions	Adaptive Skills: Cognitive	Adaptive Skills: Behavioral	Adaptive Skills: Emotional
1. Problem orientation	1. Social inferential ability		1. Self-monitoring of internal discomfort
2. Negative emotional response	2. Labeling of negative emotion (e.g., anxiety, depression, excitement) and assessing intensity of response	2. Ability to control behavioral response.	2. Labeling of negative emotion (e.g., anxiety, depression, excitement) and assessing intensity of response
3. Cope with negative emotional response	3. Identify covert self-punishment, catastrophic thinking, intervene with coping self-taking, self-reinforcement	3. Control of nonverbal responses, use of time out	3. Relax physiologically
4. Problem solve (a) clarify goal (b) generate alternatives (c) evaluate select alternative	4. (a) state one goal in one sentence, (b) divergent thinking, (c) social inferential ability to assess realistic consequences of behavior	4. (a) direct requests, refusals, (b) behavioral repertoire to implement any alternative	4. Assessment and ability to control new emotional states that arise
5. Respond behaviorally	5. Belief you have right to be assertive, self-esteem in ability to respond	5. Verbal skills (disclosures, I statements, requests, refusals), nonverbal skills (eye contact, voice tone, latency level, facial expression)	5. Relaxation techniques
6. Evaluate	6. Self-reinforce, goal set	6. Request feedback from environment	6. Monitor and assess internal state

Fig. 2. Model for social interaction process with associated prerequisite cognitive, behavioral, and emotional responses for effective interpersonal style. Note Number 1 under Adaptive Skills-Behavioral was missing in the original.

nonverbal responses and to pause or take "time out" to cope with the situation. Then, emotionally it is helpful to attempt to relax physiologically. Again, the failure to exercise one component could spiral into a poor situation; however, the use of one component--e.g., relaxing physiologically--could spiral into a successful one.

A more detailed description of adolescent social skills was developed by Sprafin, Gershaw, and Goldstein (1980) who earlier had worked with adult psychiatric patients and adolescents with social problems. As part of a training program for adolescents who were having problems with agression, these researchers had to define the specific behaviors that comprised social competence among adolescents. They identified 50 fundamental skills, grouped into six categories:

Group I. Beginning Social Skills

1. Listening
2. Starting a conversation
3. Having a conversation
4. Asking a question
5. Saying thank you
6. Introducing yourself
7. Introducing other people
8. Giving a compliment

Group II. Advanced Social Skills

9. Asking for help
10. Joining in
11. Giving instructions
12. Following instructions
13. Apologizing
14. Convincing others

Group III. Skills for Dealing with Feelings

15. Knowing your feelings
16. Expressing your feelings
17. Understanding the feelings of others
18. Dealing with someone else's anger
19. Expressing affection
20. Dealing with fear
21. Rewarding yourself

Group IV. Skill Alternative to Aggression

22. Asking permission
23. Sharing something
24. Helping others
25. Negotiating
26. Using self-control
27. Standing up for your rights
28. Responding to teasing
29. Avoiding trouble with others
30. Keeping out of fights

Group V. Skills for Dealing with Stress

31. Making a complaint
32. Answering a complaint
33. Sportsmanship after the game
34. Dealing with embarrassment
35. Dealing with being left out
36. Standing up for a friend
37. Responding to persuasion
38. Responding to failure
39. Dealing with confusing messages

41. Getting ready for a difficult conversation
42. Dealing with group pressure

Group VI. Planning Skills

43. Deciding on something to do
44. Deciding what caused a problem
45. Setting a goal
46. Deciding on your abilities
47. Gathering information
48. Arranging problems by importance
49. Making a decision
50. Concentrating on a task

Note: Component 40 was missing in original text of Spraffin, Gershaw, and Goldstein.

Each of these is broken down further into "learning points" that outline effective methods or procedures for carrying out the responses required by the skill. For example, Skill 31, "Making a complaint" has the following learning points:

1. Define what the problem is and who is responsible.
2. Decide how the problem might be solved.
3. Tell that person what the problem is and how it might be solved.
4. Ask for his response.
5. Show that you understand his feelings.
6. Come to agreement on the steps to be taken by each of you.

Of course even these subskills require further explication and skills. For example, "telling the other person what the problem is and how it might be solved" involves a good deal of what is called "tact" mixed with assertion. In any case, these researchers have outlined specific interpersonal skills that are needed in adolescence. They would appear to have considerable generality, even if they may seem elementary. For example, many highly successful adults have difficulty making complaints, and others have difficulty expressing affection. Although there are generally accepted ways of doing all these things, many adolescents and adults are deficient in one area or another. These skills, then, would seem to define basic social competence in our society. They represent the multiple options needed in socially challenging situations that can lead to appropriate and effective responses.

Adult Functioning

Research on social competence of adults has tended to focus on the psychiatric approach and the definitions of effective leadership behavior.

Traditional Psychiatric Approaches. Psychiatric theory has traditionally concentrated on the intrapsychic with interpersonal relations considered an outgrowth of intrapersonal processes. Freud's conception of a "normal" person, such as it can be found in his writings, is that of an individual who can balance external and internal demands (Reiff, 1960). The person can accept reality, both in the external world and in his own actions and wishes. The ego makes plans and schedules actions in the most rational way possible. The well-adjusted person is thus able to plan and carry out realistic courses of action, is able to work, has made adequate use of his or her abilities, can postpone present satisfaction for perhaps much later goals, and can sublimate and accept substitutions when necessary. The well-adjusted person is responsible, can make decisions and carry out the plans of the ego with a mimimum of worry or seeking of support from others.

Jung (1960) concentrated almost solely on internal psychological life, but did describe the healthy person as being "educated for social worth," using his or her abilities in socially useful forms. The truly healthy person has avoided identification with the "persona"--the side of the personality shown to the external world--and is free from the "collective consciousness" that is sometimes misused in mass movements.

Of all traditional psychiatric writers, Adler placed most emphasis on social relations. In fact, one of his central ideas was social interest--a generalized attitude of well wishing toward mankind, with a tendency toward cooperation, identification with the group, and empathy (Ansbacher & Rowena, 1956). The more mature person gradually fuses his

or her own goals into those of the group. Adler also emphasized the importance of vocation and work, and gradually turned his attention to the improvement of society.

Sullivan (1953) emphasized the importance of realistic thinking and of the ability to form relationships in which there are equality, mutuality, and reciprocity between the partners. "...in this collaboration there is the very striking feature of a very lively sensitivity to the needs of the other and to the interpersonal security or lack of anxiety in the other." [The mature person] will be quite sympathetically understanding of the limitations, interests, possibilities, anxieties, and so on of those among whom they move or with whom they deal." (P. 310) In general, although his students termed Sullivan's ideas an "interpersonal" theory of psychiatry, it focuses on early development and clinical manifestations of psychological problems.

Later theorists, such as Horney (1937, 1950), added other ideas about interpersonal relations, but the emphasis was still on the intrapsychic. More recent writers such as Argyle, Berne, etc., have emphasized social interaction, but chiefly as a means toward individual therapy. As stimulating as many of the ideas of these writers are, we shall concentrate on two recent trends that bear more directly on interpersonal skills: interpersonal cognition and programs to improve the interpersonal skills of patients.

Recent literature. The recent clinical literature has varied from the simple identification of patterns of ineffective behavior to descriptions of fairly complex intervention programs. For example, Hersen and

Ballach (1976) indicated that patients with poor social skills typically had poor eye contact and low voice tone.

One major area of research has been on the cognitive factors in social skills. Many sources have identified irrational beliefs and distorted thinking processes that are related to poor social functioning (Ellis & Grier, 1977; Foreyt & Rathjen, 1978; Mahoney, 1974; Meichenbaum, 1977; Trower, Bryant, & Argyle, 1978). These include "... arbitrary inference, magnification, over-generalization, dichotomous reasoning, and catastrophizing... More adaptive ways for these individuals to interpret their social environments would include drawing conclusions from adequate evidence, putting events into perspective, attending to all relevant aspects of social situations, generalizing from multiple rather than single instances, and making attributions along a continuum rather than dichotomously." (Rathjen & Foreyt, 1980, p. 11) Other errors include the failure to use feedback from the environment, misperceiving social situations through projection, egocentrism, or "mind reading," focusing on irrelevant stimuli, and excessive self-arousal from inordinate concentration on internal cues (Mahoney, 1974). Other irrational ideas include the beliefs that one must be perfect, must have the approval of others, must have perfect behavior from others, must avoid any unpleasantness, etc. (Ellis & Grier, 1977).

The most thorough analysis of social skills was conducted by Trower, Bryant, and Argyle (1978), who then developed a program designed to train patients in these social skills. It is described in some detail to show the level of tasks and skills involved in ordinary social competence. It

includes the following skill elements:

1. Observation of situations and other people, consisting of
   a. Information or facts about what happened to whom
   b. Observing the feelings and attitudes of others, including being able to identify and describe others' feelings, using information about their physical appearance, vocal style, conversation, and nonverbal cues.
   c. Identifying the causes for the others' feelings--the situation, his personality, his mood, someone else or oneself.
   d. Self-observation of one's feelings, success in expression, agreement from others, and behavior that may need to be changed.

To do these, participants are taught facial cues and voice cues for surprise or interest, fear, anger, disgust or contempt, sadness, and happiness. They are also taught cues for the general attitudes of warm or friendly, assertive or dominant, neutrality, and negative or anxious. These cues are found in the other's face, gaze, voice, distance, touch, position, orientation, posture, and speech. For example, the speech cues for "warm or friendly" include the fact that the listener responds, discloses similarity, does not interrupt or disturb the others' speech, has good timing and hands over the conversation.

2. Skills in listening to others, consisting of
   a. Reflecting, by saying back what the other has said in the listener's own words so that the speaker knows the listener understands and is interested.
   b. Reflecting nonverbal expressions by attending to the other's eyebrows, forehead, eyes, eyelids, mouth, and lips.

c. Matching the other's mood by doing what the speaker does (e.g., if the speaker smiles, the listener smiles; if he looks serious, the listener looks serious).

d. Reflecting back the feelings of the other by identifying the particular feeling being expressed and using the proper words. For example, the listener may see that the speaker is fearful and say "You feel (anxious, alarmed, worried, uncertain, confused) because..."

e. Using other listener responses, when the speaker pauses, such as nodding head, or saying "uh," "yeah," "I see" etc.

f. Commenting and describing one's own feelings and beliefs, e.g., feelings of similarity (I also feel...because...) and difference (But I feel...because...), and showing feelings by face and voice.

g. Questioning skills, including the use of general questions, specific questions, and feeling questions.

h. Following a strategy consisting of observing the other, greeting him, moving gradually from general to specific questions, sharing feelings and taking leave.

3. Speaking skills, such as:

a. Talking about things in general, such as something the speaker has been involved in recently, things the speaker does, things the speaker and the listener might have in common, or current topics.

b. Talking about things in detail.

c. Talking about the speaker's feelings and opinions.

d. Disclosing feelings nonverbally.

4. Meshing or keeping a conversation going smoothly by using proper:
   a. Flow, beginning with similar topics and feelings, moving to different topics and feelings.
   b. Timing, so there are not many interruptions or long silences.
   c. Taking turns by using the special signals for handing over the conversation, taking up the conversation; or conversely, suppressing a turn signal or resisting a hand over.
5. Expression of attitudes and feelings by:
   a. Choosing a style--cold, warmth, dominance, etc.
   b. Thinking about how we want to affect the other.
   c. Carrying out the appropriate conversation.
6. Using appropriate social routines for such routine functions as starting and ending conversations, making difficult requests, such as a date or a favor, handling someone who thinks we have wronged them, dealing with someone we feel has wronged us, etc. These routines include:
   a. Greetings, which are important for smooth social relations, such as interaction greetings for starting a conversation with an acquaintance, passing greetings, for showing mutual respect for nodding acquaintances, but without involved conversation, and non-greetings, which indicate respect without social contact.
   b. Partings, which need to be used to avoid the other feeling insulted or rejected, and to avoid failure to end an unwanted conversation. The goal is to end the conversation decisively but without awkwardness.

c. Requests which involve asking for certain things without embarrassment or insult. The authors recommend using nonverbal immediacy cues, explaining the situation, and making the request directly and to the point. If the other complies, appreciation is offered verbally and nonverbally, but if the other refuses with apology, the request is minimized and appreciation is offered.

d. Procedures for approaching strangers, either in private, or in public so that a conversation can begin. A variety of actions are suggested.

e. Offering praise, help, and other kinds of support, by using accepted and conventional ways of doing so that bring pleasure to the other and are expected. Failure to do so may result in hurt feelings.

f. "Making good" on routines used when someone thinks we have done them wrong or rejected them. The routines that are outlined are techniques for explaining actions, apologizing for them and saving one's own and the other's face.

g. Asserting oneself when someone has done wrong, failed to fulfill a service promised, made unreasonable demands, etc. Sequences of activities are suggested for assertion, where the goal is to restore the situation and get an apology, and for refusal, where the goal is to refuse in the face of persistence.

7. Tactics, which involves being flexible and using the repertoire of skills listed above, by thinking of alternatives, choosing the best one, and using it at the right moment.

8. Using a plan or strategy for a whole conversation, depending on what we want in the situation and on our repertoire of skills. These include strategies for:

   a. Rewarding others, where the goal is to get the other interested, talking and responding more, to feel more friendly towards the speaker.

   b. Controlling others where the goal is to get the other to talk less, or about different things, and reduce his control of the speaker and the situation.

   c. Presenting oneself in the best possible light to make a good impression.

For each of these, the authors suggest a sequence of general behaviors that may be effective.

The similarity of this list of skills with those developed for adolescents is obvious. Both reflect the basic forms of social expectations and responsiveness needed for social competence in our society. They both may appear somewhat elementary, but, as noted earlier, their appropriate and effective use can be a considerable art, one that is missing from the behavioral repertoire of many otherwise successfully functioning adults.

The list of skills suggest at least six questions (Rathjen, 1980):

1. What are the relevant tasks a competent person must be able to perform?
2. What behavior defines competent and incompetent solutions for the population in question?

3. What is the subject population and what are its relevant processing characteristics?
4. What knowledge or underlying rules lead to competent and incompetent performance?
5. How is individual knowledge assessed?
6. How is the necessary knowledge taught and learned?

In general, there seems to be some consensus in answers to the first three questions, at least for the majority of people in our society. However, the answer to the fourth is a matter for continued basic research. The answers to the fifth and sixth demand considerably more research. We shall return to these questions later.

Leadership. One way to address the question of social competence is to examine the behaviors and skills of those whom society would term socially skillful. These would include certain leaders and highly skillful individuals.

Effective leaders need to have many interpersonal skills. For example, as outlined by Doob (1979) the functions of supervisors include planning, directing, and controlling the work of others, assigning work, making decisions, motivating subordinates, setting job objectives with subordinates, setting priorities, setting performance standards, and reaching mutual agreements with subordinates about objectives and performance. More generally, when leaders in a wide variety of group situations were studied, they were found to perform five functions common to all the groups (Hemphill, 1962). They

1. Advanced the group's purposes.
2. Administered.
3. Inspired greater activity or set the pace.

4. Made members feel secure within the group.

5. Acted without regard to their own self-interest.

Stogdill (1974) reviewed the research on leadership and identified six functions associated with leadership:

1. Defining objectives and maintaining goal directions.

2. Providing means for goal attainment.

3. Providing and maintaining group structure.

4. Facilitating group action and interaction.

5. Maintaining group cohesiveness and member satisfaction.

6. Facilitating group task performance.

Bowers and Seashore (1966) reviewed a number of factor analytic studies of leadership, and found four general common dimensions:

1. Support. Behavior that enhances someone else's feeling of personal worth and importance.

2. Interaction facilitation. Behavior that encourages members of the group to develop close, mutually satisfying relationships.

3. Goal emphasis. Behavior that stimulates an enthusiasm for meeting the group's goal or achieving excellent performance.

4. Work facilitation. Behavior that helps achieve goal attainment by such activities as scheduling, coordinating, planning, and by providing resources such as tools, materials, and technical knowledge.

More generally, a number of reseachers, especially Bales (1965), have found two general kinds of leadership contributions: (1) initiating structure and supervising the tasks and (2) showing consideration and providing support for the people involved. Although there are occasionally two separate leaders providing these functions, in most cases a single leader must perform both, balancing the two requirements. Imbalance results when the leader is so eager to have high quality outcomes that he

or she ignores the feelings of members, or when he or she is so concerned with the emotional well-being of the group that he or she cannot insist on rigorous standards.

However, the review by Bowers and Seashore (1966) suggests a third function of leadership that is purely procedural -- an administrator or coordinator of group activity.

To perform these various functions, the leader needs to have a wide repertoire of skills ranging from the reflective to the directive, as described by Athos (1978): expressing interpretation, encouragement, assurance; asking questions from the point of view of the follower, asking questions from the point of view of the leader; confrontation, challenge, agreement or disagreement; advice or suggestion; and entreatment, commands, and threats.

Obviously, these various interpersonal skills do not comprise all that is included in leadership. The technical problems involved in finding and organizing information, planning, decision making, etc., are not included. In addition, the higher levels of supervision in large, complex organizations are not covered. However, the leadership functions outlined here appear to have some generality across situations, and probably apply to the higher levels as well. For example, Campbell (1977) found that the actual daily lives of prominent leaders in a variety of settings indicated that a major portion of their activities are carried out through face-to-face oral transactions and their effectiveness in such contexts defines their competence as leaders. Effectiveness as a leader stems from "...the ability of an interactant to choose

among available communication behaviors in order that he may successfully accomplish his own goals during an encounter while maintaining the face and line of his fellow interactants within the constraints of the situation." (Wiemann, 1977)

However, successful leadership is highly dependent on the situation.

> Research results suggest that the traits and abilities required of a leader tend to vary from one situation to another. The best predictor of leadership is prior success in this role. But a previously successful leader may fail when placed in a situation that imposes demands incompatible with his personality or stabilized pattern of interaction and performance. (Stogdill, 1974)

Thus, leaders must match the tasks and people in the situation, and effective leaders have to be in the "right place at the right time" (Fiedler, 1977). In general, research tends to support this view. Different kinds of leaders seem to function best in certain kinds of situations, with the chief influence on their success being the degree of structure in the situation (Vroom, 1976; Hunt & Larson, 1974).

The specific skills needed by leaders have been identified by Friedman (1980) from a review of the literature on leadership.

A. Initiating and managing social interaction--meeting and getting to know others; making appropriate comments to keep conversations going, rather than leaving long, awkward pauses, interrupting often, or ignoring others; asking questions to draw others out; and relating one's own comments to the comments of others.

B. Disclosing, sharing information about oneself appropriately--relating the "here and now" of an interaction of one's past experiences to what is occurring; being seen as genuine, open, unguarded.

C. Showing empathy or understanding of what others think and feel--indicating that one is listening attentively; trying to comprehend others' messages as they are intended; checking out the accuracy of one's understanding periodically.

D. Dealing with feelings--recognizing the role of affective energies in relationships; allowing the arousal and full expression of emotions in oneself and others.

E. Deepening relationships--allowing closeness, vulnerability, intimacy with others; forming interdependent, close-knit, lasting friendships.

F. Experimenting with interactions--employing creative behaviors such as role-playing, fantasizing, speculating, dramatizing, theorizing, and storytelling; using "growth" experiences such as support groups, human relations workshops, and other challenging or expansive learning methods.

G. Being assertive--not being habitually dominant or passive, "owning" one's views, rather than repressing them; not pressuring or accusing others to achieve an artificial agreement.

H. Wording ideas concretely and clearly--expressing viewpoints in vivid, specific terms so that others can visualize them accurately; not being habitually vague or abstract; not resorting to "I can't express it"; taking a clear position and explaining it with illustrative examples.

I. Being confident and relaxed--interacting in an easy, flowing manner, tolerant of diversity and ambiguity in others; being generally calm and patient in interaction; not tense, hurried, clipped, or abrupt.

J. Structuring or planning problem-solving activities--delegating responsibilities; defining and assigning roles; clarifying problems; identifying criteria; eliciting proposed solutions; comparing and selecting solutions; developing action plans.

K. Persuading, influencing others--building agreement among people by arguing for a point of view; changing others' positions without making them feel dimished or "wrong."

L. Supporting, praising, "stroking" others--communicating one's concern for others' welfare; encouraging and reinforcing others; affirming others' worth and the value of their efforts.

M. Critiquing, confronting, challenging others--providing feedback in ways that are perceived as helpful: pointing out the discrepancy between what others have done and what they've agreed to do, what the job requires, or what they have the potential to do.

N. Negotiating, resolving interpersonal conflicts--bargaining; clarifying differences among viewpoints and exploring approaches to accepting or reconciling them; developing compromise or collaborative agreements in conflict situations.

This listing of skills is strikingly similar to those promoted for adolescents and adult psychiatric patients, although the overall level of skill may be higher. For example, the specific behaviors under skill A are very similar to those in the Spraffin, Gershaw, and Goldstein (1980) training program, as are most of the others. The only areas that seem to receive appreciably greater emphasis in this listing than in the earlier listings are J - Structuring or planning problem-solving activities, K - Persuading, influencing others, and M - Critiquing, confronting, challenging others. Even here, the chief difference seems to be based on the social role of the leader--i.e., the leader is supposed to plan activities, persuade others, and critique others. Otherwise the leader is to behave much like any other socially competent adult.

Perhaps the chief characteristic of the outstanding leader is what Friedman calls effective flexibility. That is, the outstanding leader shifts easily from one of these modes of interaction into another. They ". . . have full freedom to choose the ends of interaction they might pursue, and they have available a large repertoire of skills which can be employed to achieve those ends . . . (those) willing to risk wanting and working for intimacy and responsibility must have a sense of their own and others' worth. The range of people and tasks with which they are willing to engage is further evidence of their potential in this area." (Friedman, 1980)

Again, however, it appears that this is chiefly a matter of degree. For example, Spraffin, Gershaw, and Goldstein (1980) described "strategies" which lead to effective use of specific skills. It is just that, like

the experienced tennis player who adjusts to the play of his or her opponent, the leader or the "socially gifted" can shift gears almost subconsciously, and can use the skills more adroitly than less skillful adults. Overall, however, the same skills are involved.

Discussion

The research reviewed in the previous pages suggests that there are several types of interpersonal skills that are used throughout the life-span. They are required at a fairly elementary level among children, become more important among adolescents, and reach full development among adults. These would include the proper use of basic social forms. That is, the simple procedures used to express greetings, begin a conversation, carry out a conversation, end a conversation, express farewells, express gratitude, etc., are part of the socialization of the child (say, "thank you"). The behaviors expected of adolescents become somewhat more difficult, and those of the adult represent full social competence. Those who are "socially gifted" go beyond competence to a high level of skill. For example, the charming hostess or the brilliant conversationalist may appear to be glittering ornaments of the social scene, but are actually demonstrating a sensitivity to and understanding of social forms that is attained by few.

Beyond the basic social skills are those that demand more intimacy and common interactions with others. These include asking for help, giving instructions, apologizing or making up to others, and convincing or influencing others. These are typically taught in informal ways

during adolescence, although many adults are deficient in the skills. That is, many educated adults have difficulty in providing instructions for others, apologizing, and/or providing a convincing case for their viewpoint, however well-founded it may be in the facts.

For many people, constructive assertiveness is very difficult, as witnessed by the recent rash of best sellers on the subject. Complaining, standing up for one's rights, and negotiating all involve assertion and the potential for aggression and anger on the part of the other person. Many, perhaps most people in our society have not been socialized to handle such confrontations effectively by making their own points and holding their ground without antagonizing the other person so that a mutually satisfactory outcome can be worked out. Rather, they tend to give up or respond with their own anger. These skills require a high level of interpersonal effectiveness.

Another cluster of skills involve what might be called intrapersonal skills. For example, recognizing one's own feelings, using self-control, dealing with failure, dealing with frustration, and dealing with another's anger all require internal monitoring. Again many adults have great difficulty with these tasks, and a truly skillful person is rare.

A related cluster involves the expression of emotions. Expressing feelings, expressing affection, and expressing fear all require skills at identifying one's emotions, selecting a way to express them, and attention to the feedback from one's listener.

A cluster that is often considered important in organizations involves planning, group decision-making, and coordination of activities. These

kinds of skills are important in many group settings, ranging from social clubs, volunteer organizations, churches, businesses, government, and national societies.

Although these clusters of interpersonal skills can be identified, it is still very unclear whether they can be accurately assessed so that the assessments can be used in practice. For example, there have been a wide variety of attempts to measure "social intelligence" which, as originally defined by Thorndike (Thorndike & Stein, 1937), consisted of two components: understanding others and wise social action. The variety of research that has focused on social intelligence and the attempts to measure it have been reviewed by Walker and Foley (1973). Some of the measures designed to assess social intelligence include the George Washington Social Intelligence Test; the Chapin Social Insight Test, the Dymond Rating Tests, the Role-Taking Test, and the Guilford group's Six Factor Tests of Social Intelligence. There is little evidence that these measures reliably assess a trait that is generalizable across situations. In addition, a number of the instruments may only be measuring verbal ability. However, it seems likely that assessment of the basic social skills is possible. That is, the social norms involving introductions, initiating a conversation, etc., are sufficiently clear that simulations or ratings of these competencies would be possible. However, assessment of generic skills such as internal monitoring, would probably be extremely difficult. A more efficient strategy would be to select a particular skill that is important in the criterion situation, such as negotiation in business, attempts at influencing others in law, or gaining the attention of a class in teaching. Then the specific

components of these skills could be identified, and levels of skill defined. A variety of techniques could then be used to assess these skills: paper and pencil simulations (e.g., the work by Alderman, Evans, & Wilder, 1980); video-simulations (e.g., Stricker, 1982); paper and pencil exercises (e.g., something analogous to the effort to assess scientific thinking by Frederiksen & Ward, 1978); or ratings from knowledgeable observers. Each of these approaches has well-known advantages and disadvantages in terms of reliability, generalizability of the behavior elicited to other behaviors, and validity in different settings. Probably the most effective strategy would be for groups that are concerned with particular interpersonal skills to attempt to assess them in the most naturalistic way that reflects the realities of their fields.

References

Alderman, D. L., Evans, F. R., & Wilder, G. Assessing clinical skills in legal education: Simulation exercises in client interviewing (RR-80-36). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, 1980.

Anderson, S., & Messick, S. Social competency in young children. Developmental Psychology, 1974, 10, 282-293.

Ansbacher, H. L., & Rowena, R. (Eds.). The individual psychology of Alfred Adler. New York: Basic Books, 1956.

Athos, A. G., & Gabarro, J. J. Interpersonal behavior: Communication and understanding in relationships. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978.

Bales, R. F. The equilibrium problem in small groups. In Small groups: Studies in social interaction, ed. by A. Paul Hare, E. G. Borgatta, and R. Bales, rev. ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965.

Baltes, P. B., & Brim, O. G. Life-span development and behavior (Annual). New York: Academic Press, 1978, 1979, 1980.

Bowers, D. G., & Seashore, S. E. Predicting organizational effectiveness with a four-factor theory of leadership. Administrative Science Quarterly, 1966, 11, 238-263.

Camp, B., & Bash, N. A. Developing self-control through training in problem solving. In Rathjen, D. P., & Foreyt, J. P. (Eds.), Social competence. New York: Pergamon, 1980.

Campbell, J. P. The cutting edge of leadership: An overview. Pp. 221-233 in Hunt, J. B., & Larson, L. L. Leadership: The cutting edge. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977.

Cartledge, G., & Milburn, J. F. The case for teaching social skills in the classroom: A review. Review of Educational Research, 1978, 48, 133-156.

Cole, L., & Hall, I. N. Psychology of adolescence (6th Ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966.

Doob, L. W. Pathways to people. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975.

Ellis, A., & Grier, R. Handbook of rational-emotive therapy. New York: Spring, 1977.

Fiedler, F. E. Leadership. New York: American Management Association, 1977.

Foreyt, J., & Rathjen, D. P. (Eds.). Cognitive behavior therapy: Research and application. New York: Plenum Press, 1978.

Frederiksen, N., & Ward, W. C. Measures for the study of creativity in scientific problem solving. Applied Psychological Measurement, 1978, 2, 1-24.

Friedman, P. G. Teaching the gifted and talented: Oral communication and leadership. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1980.

Goffman, J., Gonso, J., & Rasmussen, B. Social interaction, social competence and friendship in children. Child Development, 1975, 46, 709-718.

Havighurst, R. J. Developmental tasks and education. New York: McKay, 1972.

Hemphill, J. In Hare, P., Handbook of small group research. New York: The Free Press, 1962.

Hersen, M., & Bellach, A. S. (Eds.). Behavioral assessment: A practical handbook. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1976.

Horney, K. The neurotic personality of our time. New York: W. W. Norton, 1937.

Horney, K. Neurosis and human growth. New York: W. W. Norton, 1950.

Hunt, J. G., & Larson, L. L. (Eds.). Contingency approaches to leadership. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1974.

Jung, C. G. The basic writings of C. G. Jung. New York: Random House, 1960.

Lamb, M. E. (Ed.). Social and personality development. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1978.

Mahoney, M. J. Cognition and behavior modification. Cambridge, Mass.: Ballinger Publishing Co., 1974.

Meichenbaum, D. Cognitive-behavior modification: An integrative approach. New York: Plenum Press, 1977.

Mussen, P. H., Conger, J. J., & Kagan, J. Child development and personality. (Fifth edition). New York: Harper & Row,1979.

Mussen, R. H., Conger, J. J., Kagan, J., & Geiwitz, J. Psychological development: A life span approach. New York: Harper & Row, 1979.

Muuss, R. E. Theories of adolescence. New York: Random House, 1966.

Rathjen, D. P. An overview of social competence. Pp. 1-23, in Rathjen, D. P., & Foreyt, J. P. (Eds.), Social competence, New York: Pergamon, 1980.

Reiff, R. Freud: The mind of a moralist. New York: Viking Press, 1960.

Reese, H. W. et al. (Eds.). Advances in child development and behavior (Annual), 1963, New York Academic Press, 1963, 1964, etc.

Rolf, M., Sells, S. B., & Golden, M. M. Social adjustment and personality development in children. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1972.

Rotherman, M. J. Social skills training programs in elementary and high school programs. Pp. 69-112 in Rathjen, D. P., & Foreyt, J. P., Social competence. New York: Pergamon, 1980.

Selman, R. L. Toward a structural analysis of developing interpersonal relations concepts. Research with normal and disturbed preadolescent boys. In Pich, A. D. (Ed.), Minnesota symposia on child psychology. Volume 10. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976.

Shure, M. B., Real life problem solving for parents and children: An approach to social competence. In Rathjen, D. P., & Foreyt, J. P. Social competence. New York: Pergamon, 1980.

Spivach, G., Platt, J. J., & Shure, M. B. The problem solving approach to adjustment: A guide to research and intervention. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976.

Spraffin, R., Gershaw, N. J., & Goldstein, A. Structured-learning therapy: Overview and applications to adolescents and adults. Pp. 127-146 in Rathjen, D. P., & Foreyt, J. P., Social competence. New York: Pergamon, 1980.

Stogdill, R. M. Handbook of leadership: A survey of theory and research. New York: The Free Press, 1974.

Stricker, L. J. Interpersonal competence instrument: Development and preliminary findings. Applied Psychological Measurement, 1982, 6, 69-81.

Sullivan, H. S. The interpersonal theory of psychiatry. New York: Norton, 1953.

Thorndike, R. L., & Stein, S. An evaluation of the attempts to measure social intelligence. Psychological Bulletin, 1937, 34, 275-285.

Trower, P., Bryant, B., & Argyle, M. Social skills and mental health. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1978.

Vroom, V. H. Leadership. Chapter 34 in M. D. Dunnette (Ed.), Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1976.

Walker, R. L., & Foley, J. M. Social intelligence: Its history and measurement. Psychological Reports, 1973, 33, 839-864.

Weimann, J. Explication and test of a model of communication competence. Human Communication Research, 1977, 3, 195-213.